

Duxbury Clipper, Thursday, September 16, 1971

from Chappa Challa

"Ken, this is the most money I've ever made in my life!" Chuck, a 15 year old lad, referred to us by the courts, was all excited as we paid him \$49.75 for his share in Chappa Challa's work program. Chuck faced bleak despair in the lock-up of the Youth Service Board. Suddenly he felt sunshine, fresh air and loving hearts and helping hands taking him into Project Chappa Challa on Powder Point.

Take a long look from June to September, and all the staff would agree that the time sped quickly by. In that first month we did the blueprint work and the cleanup. From a year's experience at Project Lighthouse, Arlene Arruda drew up the proposal and wrote the entire program in detail.

She wrote: "Chappa Challa would not be providing a 'summer vacation' for youth. Rather, it is to be a place where alienated youth and staff work together to attain a solution to the youth's problems."

As all of us look back, the solutions have been incredible. Three areas played an especially important part in the program. First, WORK. We had to be REAL. No funding was at hand. We now recognize that as a blessing. Since we had to provide for ourselves the rule was adopted: "If you don't work, you don't eat." Several times our teenagers were sent away from the supper table because they had "goofed off." This honest and fair discipline brought peace and understanding. Chappa Challa belonged to all of us.

Our principal work in the community was painting. Let me now say a special thanks to those beautiful people who offered us the jobs that made

our youth feel they were needed. Of course the attention span for a disturbed youth is short. But in understanding that, we found the solutions to many other problems.

Ed Dillon, who wrote the article for the Clipper several weeks ago, was work director. Patience, endless patience, mixed with great understanding, sprinkled with humor, and cooked over the ability to play the guitar and to sing, produced marvelous results. For example, one of our boys who had been on heroin, was hardly able to stay on the job an hour at first. In fact, the first week he was useless. By late August he was working eight hours a day. The therapy about work is that it is REAL. The youth sees the improvement of the house he is painting. The sense of stability and self confidence that comes at the end of a work day, gives him promise that he is needed and valuable.

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Sure, most of the summer's hassles were over work. Yet many of the youths' problems were sort of distilled under the hot sun and in the pressure cooker of work.

Back at camp these problems could be vocalized; 24 hour counseling is a rare and exceptional commodity. Since the staff were always with the teenagers, every problem could be dealt with immediately. Sleeping with the staff, one young man who had a craze for knives, and knew only how to express himself in violence (beating on people or things) finally cried one night. That was a turning point in his life. He told his counselor that he didn't know how to express his feelings. He hurt the people he loved. After that he would come to my cabin at the end of the day. Like a child home

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skill and insights of two teachers, especially Linda Thayer and Sandy Houghton, brought almost all of our drop-outs back to school this September. Many of them made up courses this summer, passed their exams and were able to keep up with their classes. Once the emotional problems of our youth were brought into focus, they were more adaptable to studies.

Another important aspect that was not planned, yet became very evident during the summer was, that the community of Duxbury became aware that our alienated youth needed community love and understanding. Thanks especially to the volunteer staff who worked daily as coordinators, food managers and meal planners and coun-

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from school, we would talk about his day. It was always 1 or 2 a.m. when we finished.

Staff members like Peggy Knowlton and Robert Bachand (Bash) spent endless hours rapping with the kids. They know the horrors of the real scene. Where a teenager's imagination builds wild expectations, the convincing experience of a sincere and concerned counselor plants reality. Together they seed truth. In the moments of weakness, they weed the false promises. Together in moments of success they feed upon a new freedom.

A third important factor in Chappa Challa's success was the tutoring program. Who would have expected the kids who had rejected the system to want to learn? But the

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selors many beautiful friendships were established. We also want to thank so many others who made Camp Chappa Challa possible, our neighbors who were so generous with their gifts and gardens; the craftsmen who made our kitchen and cupboards; Francis Boucher, who came so often at night to free us from the mosquitoes; the many friends all over town who sent us gifts, money, utensils, vegetables, food, bedding and even the selectmen who brought us toilet tissue one night when the going was rough.

There is no better way to say "Goodbye" than in the lines written by one of our girls: "In the last week of camp I was alone for 15 minutes. Everyone was gone, so I said goodbye to everything."